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## **IEMA Encourages Businesses to Prepare for Disasters**

### ***Planning Can Protect Employees and Customers, Help Businesses Recover Following Disasters***

SPRINGFIELD – Many people have assembled emergency supply kits and developed family communications plans to ensure their homes are prepared for a disaster. But disasters can strike at any time, day or night, when people are working, shopping or visiting a business. That's why it's important for businesses to have a disaster preparedness plan that addresses worker and customer safety and business continuity.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is highlighting business preparedness throughout July as part of its 12 month preparedness campaign.

“Businesses that have preparedness plans and regularly exercise those plans are better able to ensure the safety of their workers and their customers,” said IEMA Director Jonathon Monken. “Having a plan can also help businesses protect their facilities, products and electronic information and get back up and running quickly after a disaster. Taking these steps plays a critical role in saving lives and ensuring an entire community gets back on its feet more quickly following a disaster.”

The Insurance Information Institute estimates that up to 40 percent of businesses affected by a natural or human-caused disaster never reopen.

The first step in developing a plan to protect employees and customers is to assess the threats in your area, such as tornadoes, flooding or blizzards. Develop a plan that addresses each threat, taking into consideration time of day and different shifts. Include a way to monitor hazardous weather, such as a NOAA weather alert radio. It's important to practice the plan regularly so employees are familiar with the actions to take if a real emergency occurs.

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Business continuity planning includes a business impact analysis, which predicts the consequences of disruption of a business function. Identifying and evaluating the impact of disasters on business provides the basis for developing recovery strategies, as well as prevention and mitigation strategies.

Information about businesses preparedness is available on the Ready Illinois website at [www.Ready.Illinois.gov](http://www.Ready.Illinois.gov).